

to increase than to clear up the present vagueness of our knowledge of the status of the species.

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F. S. BRIGGS.

XI.—SEX DIFFERENCES IN THE MIGRATION OF THE COMMON TEAL (*NETTION CRECA*)

It may interest you to know that while I was in Kashmir between January and February, 1930, I shot a considerable number of Common Teal. All of them with one exception were drakes. I believe that it has been noticed by other observers that the females of the Common Teal are in a large majority in early winter and later their places are taken almost entirely by drakes. This was certainly borne out by my observation.

PORTLAND PARK,
ALIPUR, CALCUTTA,
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M. D. N. WYATT.

[Differences in migration behaviour related to sex and age have frequently come under notice. Gatke from his observations of the movements of birds at Heligoland held that adult males tended to be later in migration than the females. His view seems to be supported by the observations of Mr. Wyatt and others in reference to the autumn migration of the Common Teal into India. The behaviour of migrating birds must vary in different species and no general rule can be laid down without further confirmation.—Eds.]

XII.—NOTES ON THE NESTING HABITS OF THE RED-VENTED BULBUL (*MOLPASTES CAFER*).

A pair of these birds built their nest and brought up three young just opposite the front door of a friend of mine, in the heart of the city. I. R. drew my attention to the nest, and we both watched the parent birds for a considerable time feeding their young. One interesting point resulted from our observations. It is a well-known fact that the nests of birds are seldom soiled by the excreta of the young. This cleanliness is generally attributed to the fact that the young either excrete in such a way so as to 'shoot' the excrements beyond the limits of the nest, a very common thing with the Birds of Prey, for example, or, the parent birds are responsible for cleaning the nest when leaving it after feeding the young. In the former case the excreta of the young is usually in a very liquid state, but in the latter the excreta is generally enveloped in a thin tenacious film which is not easily punctured. This facilitates its removal from the nest.

To return to the birds under observation, we noticed that in this case, at least, that each time the parents fed one of the young, they would immediately go round to the nether end and wait for it to excrete. It is well known that as soon as nestlings are fed, they excrete immediately after. In the present instance it was observed that each time the young excreted, the parent birds would take hold of the excreta as it emerged and swallow it. This procedure was repeated each time the young were fed. Here arises a question. Why should the parent birds swallow the excreta? In domestic animals, such as the dog and the cat, it is common knowledge that the mother eats the afterbirth and other secretions at the time of birth and later on cleans up both the excreta and the urine of the young. Is it possible that in such cases the reason for such a habit serves only as a means of keeping the nest or lair clean or, is it that there still remains in the excretions of the young a certain amount of undigested nourishment which helps also to nourish the parent? For at the time when animals are burdened with young, they appear to have little time for feeding themselves; being occupied the greater part of that time either in protecting or feeding the young. In the case of birds it seems as though the parents have little time to obtain a sufficient supply of food for themselves when they are burdened with young. The parent birds are seen going to and fro all day from the nest and one wonders what time they have to feed themselves. They can only bring one insect at a time, and young birds take a lot of feeding. Therefore it does seem possible that the parents do derive a certain amount of nourishment from the excreta of their young which is in all probability only partially digested.

Another point of interest is that though the nest was in a most exposed situation, these little birds were able to hold their own against the crows that infested the locality. No crows were permitted to come within a certain distance of the nest. If they did they were immediately attacked, the bulbuls' rapid movements were too much for the crows, forcing them to beat a hasty retreat. It seemed strange that despite the great difference in size, the crows would not make a stand to defend themselves but would only fly out of the area.

BOMBAY NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY, C. MCCANN, F.L.S.,
BOMBAY, Assistant Curator.
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XIII.—DOUBLE NESTS OF THE WEAVER BIRD (*PLOCEUS PHILIPPINUS*).

(*With a diagram*).

In *Miscellanea Zoologica Sumatrana*, lvii, Mr. J. C. Van der Meer Mohr in a note on the nesting habits of the Malay Weaver Finch (*Ploceus passerinus infortunatus*) describes examples of 'double nests'